CLAIMS

1.   A method of training a quality assessment tool comprising the steps of

5   dividing a database comprising a plurality of samples, each with an associated mean opinion score into a plurality of distortion sets of samples according to a distortion criterion; and

        training a distortion specific assessment handler for

10   each distortion set, such that a fit between a distortion specific quality measure generated from

            a distortion specific plurality of parameters for a sample and

            the mean opinion score associated with said

15   sample
        is optimised.

2.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of

20   training the quality assessment tool, such that a fit between a quality measure generated from

            a non-distortion specific plurality of parameters together with a distortion specific quality measure for a sample, and

25   the mean opinion score associated with said sample,
        is optimised.

3.   A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 in which the samples represent speech transmitted over a

30   telecommunications network, and in which the quality

measure is representative of the quality of the speech perceived by an average user.

4. A method of assessing speech quality in a telecommunications network comprising the steps of

determining a dominant distortion type for a sample;

combining a plurality of parameters specific to said dominant distortion type to provide a distortion specific quality measure for each sample; and

generating a quality measure in dependence upon the distortion specific quality measure.

5. A method according to claim 4 in which the generating step comprises the sub step of

combining a non-distortion specific plurality of parameters with said distortion specific quality measure to provide said quality measure.

6. A method according to claim 4 or claim 5 in which the samples represent speech transmitted over a telecommunications network, and in which the quality measure is representative of the quality of the speech perceived by an average user.

7. A computer readable medium carrying a computer program for implementing the method according to any one of claims 1 to 6.

8. A computer program for implementing the method according to any one of claims 1 to 6.

9.   An apparatus for assessing speech quality in a telecommunications network comprising

         means for determining a dominant distortion type for
5   a sample;

         means for combining a distortion specific plurality of parameters to provide a distortion specific quality measure for each sample; and

         means for generating a quality measure in dependence
10   upon the distortion specific quality measure.

10.   An apparatus according to claim 9, in which

         the   generating   means   comprises   means   for combining   a   non-distortion   specific   plurality   of
15   parameters with said distortion specific quality measure to provide said quality measure.

11.   An apparatus for training a quality assessment tool comprising
20   means for dividing a database comprising a plurality of samples, each with an associated mean opinion score into a plurality of distortion sets of samples according to a distortion criterion; and

         means for training a distortion specific assessment
25   handler for each distortion set, such that a fit between a distortion specific quality measure generated from

                  a distortion specific plurality of parameters
                  for a sample and

                  the mean opinion score associated with said
30   sample

is optimised.

12. An apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising

5   means for training the quality assessment tool, such that a fit between a quality measure generated from

a non-distortion specific plurality of parameters together with a distortion specific quality measure for a sample, and

10   the mean opinion score associated with said sample, is optimised.

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